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THE LIBERAL PARTY:

*ITS TRUE CHARACTER;
BETRAYALS OF THE WORKERS; AND
DESERVED EXTINGUISHMENT.*

BY

J. S. STUART-GLENNIE, M.A.,
OF THE MIDDLE TEMPLE, BARRISTER-AT-LAW,
AUTHOR OF 'THE NEW PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY,' ETC.,
EDITOR OF 'GREEK FOLK-SONGS,' ETC.

'Stand forth, an' tell yon Premier Youth,
The honest, open, naked truth.'

BURNS: *Earnest Cry and Prayer.*

GUILDFORD:
PRINTED BY BILLING & SONS.
1895.

PREFACE.

IN many books and writings since my first literary work—a translation of the late Lothar Bucher's '*Parlamentarismus wie er ist*'—I have more or less fully indicated the inevitableness of the transformation of the Liberal Party into one far more definitely opposed to the Conservative Party, and the consequent origin of New Parliamentary Parties. The rise during the last fifteen years of a great variety of associations with more or less definite, and more or less extended, socialistic aims has manifestly brought within measurable distance the formation of such New Parties. And on the sudden fall of the late Liberal Ministry, I was seized with the desire of contributing, in however small and humble a way, to the hastening of what I had so long foreseen.

For if the inevitableness of the extinguishment of the Liberal Party, in transformation into a Party founded on far more definite principles, was a deduction from historical facts, the desirableness of such an extinguishment and transformation was the result of political experiences. I allude to the opportunities I have had—and more particularly in my connection, during the last dozen years, with the Executive of the Crofter Movement—of becoming acquainted with the true character of the Liberal Party, and with such corruption in political life as can be ended only by the rise of New Parties.

each founded on principles and inspired by aims subordinating merely personal ambitions. And, indeed, when the Leadership of the Liberal Party passed from a man of such exalted moral character as well as pre-eminent intellectual gifts as Mr. Gladstone to the horse-racing Lord Rosebery, even Liberal partisans began to feel that the doom of the Party was sealed.

But though I certainly desire that the facts and arguments stated in the following pages may have some effect in inducing Electors to vote for Independent, or even Conservative or Unionist Candidates, rather than for Liberal Candidates, I trust, and indeed believe, that such tried and independent Liberals as, for instance, Sir Donald Macfarlane, Dr. Clark, and Mr. Weir, will again be returned to Parliament to do more good service in the cause of the Workers. I shall only add that I would fain hope that some allowance may be made for all shortcomings in statement or in style, in consideration of the swiftness with which these pages had necessarily to be written. Not begun till July 1, the Monday after that of the Resignation of Ministers (Monday, June 24), they were at press on the Monday of the Dissolution, July 8.

J. S. S.-G.

HASLEMERE, SURREY.

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THE LIBERAL PARTY :

*ITS TRUE CHARACTER;
BETRAYALS OF THE WORKERS; AND DESERVED
EXTINGUISHMENT.*

INTRODUCTION.

‘E’en in the peaceful rural vale,
Truth, weeping, tells the mournful tale
How pampered Luxury, Flattery by her side,
The Parasite empoisoning her ear,
With all the servile wretches in the rear,
Looks o’er proud Property, extended wide;
And eyes the simple rustic hind,
Whose toil upholds the glittering show,
A creature of another kind,
Some coarser substance, unrefined,
Placed for her lordly use thus far, thus vile, below.’
BURNS: A Winter Night.

THE UNREPRESENTED PARTY.

AMONG the peoples of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales there exist two great Parties; each, if viewed impartially, inspired not by selfish interests only, but by high principles, and each with aims defensible with much reason. These Parties may be perhaps best distinguished as the Party of the Masters and the Party of the Workers (Brain-workers as well as Hand-workers). And what I here desire to point out—as clearly as within my narrow limits may be possible—is, that of the two great Parties thus existing in the Country, only

one is as yet represented, as a great Party, in Parliament, and that this is the inmost secret of the present political situation.

In my First Chapter, therefore, on *The True Character of the Liberal Party*, I shall show that the differences which, on grounds of high principle, formerly distinguished Whigs and Tories having long ago been effaced, no such differences of principle now distinguish the Liberals, who have taken the place of the Whigs, from the Conservatives or Unionists, who have taken the place of the Tories ; that the Liberal Party, being, in truth, but a mere Faction of the Conservative Party, is kept up mainly for the sake of the Ministerial offices which its leaders periodically exchange with the Chiefs of that Party ; and hence that the Liberal Party—or Faction, rather—represents in Parliament, not the Party of the Workers, but the same Party of the Masters as is represented by their official, but merely official, opponents. In the Second Chapter, on *The Liberal Party's Betrayals of the Workers*, I shall demonstrate the more general statements of my First Chapter in briefly setting forth the main facts of a Decade of Betrayals, and especially of that Cause with which I have myself been for the last dozen years more intimately associated, the Claims of the Highland Crofters. And in the Third Chapter, on *The Deserved Extinguishment of the Liberal Party*, I shall urge that not inevitable only, but deserved, is the extinguishment of that Party, because—if I may speak plainly, but yet in a political, and not, of course, personal sense—of the fraudulent character of the three great Liberal Cries : ‘Abolition of the House of Lords,’ ‘Home Rule,’ and ‘Legislation for the Workers.’

Cleverly these essentially Conservative Factionists have succeeded, with their astutely-managed ‘Liberal and Radical Federation,’ in enjoying another three years

of place and power. But, as I shall point out in my *Conclusion*, the sooner their deserved doom of extinguishment is executed, the better it will, I believe, be, not only for the Cause of the Workers, but for the purification of the whole political life of the Country. And I appeal to every genuine friend of the Workers (nor of the Hand-workers only) to give some consideration to the facts and arguments which I now propose to submit, before he commits himself to a vote which may prevent this General Election being historically memorable as that of the extinguishment of the Liberal Faction, and of the beginning, at least, of the formation in Parliament of a Party of the Workers, duly representative of that which is daily growing stronger in the Country.

CHAPTER I.

THE TRUE CHARACTER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY.

‘MAMMON. Now, with a little common sense, my lords,
Only undoing all that has been done
(Yet, so as it may seem we but confirm it),
Our victory is assured. . . .
You, Purganax, who have the gift of the gab,
Make them a solemn speech to this effect.’

SHELLEY : *Swellfoot the Tyrant*, Act i., Sc. 1.

i. THE HIGH-JINKS ON RESIGNATION.

On the glorious summer evening of Monday, June 24, passing along the Horse Guards’ Parade, I observed that the long ranges of windows on the two sides of the Premier’s official residence overlooking its tree-embowered private gardens were brilliantly lighted up. I somewhat wondered at these signs of festivity, considering that the resignation of Ministers had that very

afternoon been announced, and with the saddest list of uncarried measures on which they had been presumably earnestly bent. To Mr. Gladstone the downfall of a Home Rule Government was certainly a great blow. But, as naïvely remarked next day by the *Liberal Westminster Gazette*, 'it has probably been more of a blow to him than to any member of the outgoing Ministry themselves.' And it went on to inform us that members of the Ministerial dinner-party at the Premier's residence 'reported Lord Rosebery as being *in the very highest of spirits*,' and so much so, indeed, that even 'Mr. Gladstone became infected with the prevailing spirit of hilarity.' Remarkable, surely, and hardly perhaps, under all the circumstances, easily intelligible, these high-jinks, prolonged, as we are told, till midnight. For surely it is impossible that this Liberal Ministry, which has been so effusive in its sympathies with the Workers, has been really no otherwise interested in any one of the serious questions so vitally affecting our interests than as a means of gaining or retaining for themselves place and power?

II. THE FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHIGS AND TORIES.

To understand the Present one must know something of the Past. And rapid as our survey of present political conditions must here be, it can make an approach to accuracy and clearness only if we recall some of the more salient facts of the history of Parliamentary Parties. It is little more than two hundred years since they originated under the nicknames, as they at first were, of Whig and Tory, after the overthrow of the Commonwealth and the restoration of the Monarchy. For the spirit of the Great Rebellion was not wholly quenched,

and it reappeared, in some measure at least, in the Party which now began to be formed (1672-1678), under the leadership of men who must ever be held in honour in British history as exemplars of high patriotic principle—the nobles, Lord William Russell and Lord Cavendish, afterwards the first Duke of Devonshire, and the poor, but incorruptible, commoner, supported by his Parliamentary constituents, but afforded only a garret up a court off the Strand—Andrew Marvell, formerly the friend of Milton, and his assistant as Latin Secretary to Cromwell. These were the first Whigs.*

The very definite principles and aims which distinguished these Whig and Tory Parties are thus characterized by Bolingbroke:† 'The power and majesty of the People, one original contract, the authority and independency of Parliaments, liberty, resistance, exclusion, abdication, deposition: these were the ideas associated to the idea of a Whig, and supposed by every Whig to be incommunicable and inconsistent with the idea of a Tory.' On the other hand, 'Divine, hereditary, and indefeasible right, lineal succession, passive obedience, prerogative, non-resistance, slavery, nay, sometimes Popery, too, were associated to the idea of a Tory, and deemed incommunicable and inconsistent in the same manner with the idea of a Whig.' Such were the principles that were directly involved, and the Parties that took their definite rise, in the debates on the Exclusion Bill—the Bill 'to disable the Duke of York to inherit the imperial crown of this realm' (1680).

For about a century and a half the Parties, thus definitely distinguished by their principles and aims, carried on the Government. But there was an end of

* Marvell, however, died on August 16, 1678, before the party of which he was one of the founders became known as Whigs.

† *Dissertation on Parties.*

the distinction between Whig and Tory when the Tories carried great measures justifiable only on Whig principles. Such measures were the Catholic Emancipation Act, passed by the Tory Ministry of the Duke of Wellington in 1829, and the Repeal of the Corn Laws by the Tory Ministry of Sir Robert Peel in 1846. But so definitely opposed in principle and in aim had been these two great Parliamentary Parties, that Whigs were continuously in office for fifty-six years—from 1714 to 1770—and Tories almost continuously in office for sixty years—from 1770 to 1830.* Such, when Parties were really founded on opposing principles, were the long periods during which they reigned, while Ministries only changed.

iii. THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE OLD PARTY DIFFERENCES.

Very significant of the disappearance of the Party differences of Whig and Tory, after the fall of the Duke of Wellington's Ministry in 1830, are three facts. The first of these is that speech of Lord Palmerston's in the Portugal Debate, June 1, 1829, which made the hitherto unobserved politician a world-renowned statesman. 'There are,' he said, 'two great Parties—one which endeavours to bear sway by the force of Public Opinion, another which endeavours to bear sway by the force of Physical Control. . . . The principle on which the system of this Party is founded is, in my view, fundamentally erroneous. There is in nature no moving power but mind; all else is passive and inert.† In human affairs

* The intercalated Whig Ministries of the Marquis of Rockingham and of the Earl of Shelburne, in 1782, lasted each of them but a few months; nor longer endured the Coalition Ministry of the Duke of Portland, in 1783; and but little over a year the Whig Ministry of Lord Grey in 1806.

† This may remind the Scottish reader of Sir William Hamilton's favourite motto:

this power is Opinion; in political affairs it is Public Opinion; and he who can grasp this power will subdue the fleshly arm of physical strength, and compel it to work out his purpose.' But if these were henceforth to be the only two Parties, there was certainly in England room for but one of them.

The next significant fact here to be noted is that, after 1830, Tories began to call themselves 'Conservatives'; and Whigs, as antithesis to that, began to call themselves 'Liberals.' But that the antithesis was merely nominal; that there now existed no such distinction of principles as that formerly connoted by the terms Whig and Tory; and that Liberals and Conservatives together really formed but wings of one and the same Party, united on all fundamental principles, was already said more than forty years ago. Nor was it asserted only, but generally acclaimed as true.

For the third significant fact which I have here to note is the speech in which the Earl of Aberdeen, on December 27, 1852, made the following declaration: 'I declare that, in my opinion, no Government in this country is now possible except a Conservative Government; and to that I add another declaration, which I take to be as indubitably true, that no Government in this country is now possible except a Liberal Government. The truth is that these terms have no definite meaning. These terms it may be convenient to keep up for the sake of party elections; but the country is sick of these distinctions, which have no real meaning, and prevent men from uniting together who are able to perform good service to the Crown and

'On earth there is nothing great but man;

In man there is nothing great but mind'—

—a paraphrase of the line, of disputed authorship—

'Νοὺς ὁρῇ καὶ Νοὺς ἀκούει, τὰλλα κοφὰ καὶ τυφλά.'

the Country.' How truly and prophetically 'Athenian Aberdeen' penetrated to the heart of the political situation, not only as in his own time it was, but as it would increasingly be for nearly half a century after his time, will, I believe, be evident from the further facts which I now proceed briefly to indicate.

IV. THE ESSENTIAL IDENTITY OF LIBERALS AND CONSERVATIVES.

By the essential identity of the Liberal and Conservative Parties I mean that the Liberal and Conservative Ministries which have, since 1830, succeeded each other at intervals of, on an average, about three years, have not otherwise differed from each other in fundamental principles than did either the successive Whig Ministries from 1714 to 1770, or the successive Tory Ministries from 1770 to 1830. The fact is that, just as the Country was ruled for fifty-six years by Whigs, and then for sixty years by Tories, it has for the last sixty-five years been ruled by a single Capitalist Party acting through short-lived Ministries, alternately Liberal-Conservative and Conservative-Liberal. The Country has, undoubtedly, still been governed by two Parties, acting and reacting on each other. But there has been a great difference in the form of this Government by Parties. Before 1830 each of the great governing Parties had its organized representatives in Parliament, and hardly at all out of it. Since 1830, and more especially since 1846, one, and not perhaps the least powerful of the two Parties by which the Country has been governed, has had its organized representatives chiefly outside Parliament in the immense new development of the organs of Public Opinion in Societies, Meetings, and the Press—a deve-

lopment, as we have seen, already in 1829 recognised by Lord Palmerston as begun.

But it may be said, 'Whatever truth there may in former years have been in the asserted essential identity of the Liberal and Conservative Parties, it is not so now: The Liberal is a Radical Party.' Well, the whole aim of this Pamphlet is to make it as clear as may, within its limits, be possible, that the Liberal Party is not an honestly, but a fraudulently Radical Party. A Party of the Workers which may, perhaps, be conveniently called a Radical Party—though, if so, the term must be used in a somewhat new sense*—there unquestionably is in the Country. But no more by the Liberal than by the Conservative Party is this Party of the Workers represented in Parliament. On the contrary, the chief aim of each of these Parliamentary Parties is to make capital for themselves out of the demands of the Workers; and they differ only in the way they do this in their fight with each other. Against the Conservatives the Liberals flaunt Radical—after all, but very tinkeringly Radical—Programs, which they neither carry nor desire to carry. And against the Liberals the Conservatives rouse enthusiasm by descriptions of these Programs as Red Flags of Revolution.

I shall, in the next Chapter, give some detailed facts in support of the contention just stated, but here it should be enough to point to such general facts as these. First, the variety, vagueness, and unverifiableness of the distinctions drawn by Liberals in their attempts to

* The word 'Radical' seems first to have been used in a political sense in a speech in which Pitt, on January 4, 1798, reproached the Opposition with having the intention of resisting the new taxes he demanded 'till they had obtained a Radical Reform of Parliament.' Later, the term became attached to another Party than that to which it was applied by Pitt. And later still this term 'Radical' has become too narrowed in meaning quite fitly to designate the Party of the Workers in all its various sections.

define the difference between the Conservatives and themselves is alone a sufficient indication of their essential identity. The following, for instance, is the inscription on Mr. Gladstone's bust at the National Liberal Club:

'The Principle of Toryism is mistrust of the People, qualified by Fear; the Principle of Liberalism is trust of the People, qualified by Prudence.'

Could any distinction between Liberalism and Conservatism more logically lead to the conclusion that, if the distinction between them is but thus rhetorical, they must be essentially identical? Entirely in accordance with this is the fact that Liberals practically distinguish themselves from Conservatives, not as the Whigs distinguished themselves from the Tories, by clearly definable and permanent principles, but by a succession of temporary shibboleths, and that one Faction no less than the other is constantly introducing measures which the other has proposed, or extending measures which the other has carried. And, finally, there are the known political opinions, characters, and records of the Liberal Ministers—the 'Official Liberal Gang,' as they are irreverently termed. Would there be any incongruity in imagining any one of them on the other side, on which, indeed, the most 'Radical' of them all has already taken his place? There would be no such incongruity. And this General Election will certainly show that there is a widespread and stern distrust—nay, with some, a passionate hatred and contempt—of men who appear to have advertised themselves as friends of the Workers, only to advance their own personal ambitions.

V. THE EXPLANATION OF THE HIGH-JINKS.

The reader may now, perhaps, be able to understand what, considering the failure of this Liberal Ministry to do more with their Radical Program than keep themselves in office with it for three years, he may at first have found hardly intelligible—their reported 'very highest of spirits' on the festive evening after their resignation. The true character of the Liberal Party being such as I have shown it to be—a Faction kept up by personal ambitions rather than a Party founded on definable principles—it will be now seen that a more admirably-fitting Chief it could not have than Lord Rosebery. 'Tis a Liberal Editor who has informed us, with sympathetic admiration, that the great objects of his Lordship's ambition have been entirely selfish—'to marry an heiress, to win the Derby, and to become Prime Minister.' And his 'very highest of spirits' on resigning the Premiership must be now easily intelligible. As to the late Lord Randolph Churchill they were, Politics are to Lord Rosebery but one chief means of procuring that varied and passionate excitement which is the one all-absorbing aim of what—surely with a bitter irony!—is called 'High Life.' But Lord Rosebery has not found himself strong enough for Premiership in addition to the other excitements of such life. He could not follow the high example of Lord George Bentinck and give up his horse-racing for the sake of patriotic duty. The suggestion that he should do so was replied to in letters which were models of polite insolence. What wonder, then, that his Lordship should be in 'the very highest of spirits' at being relieved of office for a time only, as he may fancy, and thus saved from the fate of his late noble rival in 'High Life' aims? He had done pretty well. For more than a year he had held the

Premiership; twice within that time he had won the Derby; and, besides 'the Blue Ribbon of the Turf,' the Ribbon of the Thistle, in addition to that already possessed of the Garter. What, compared with such Ribbon-winnings as these, was failure in winning but ostensibly-desired alleviations of the hard lives of the Workers?

CHAPTER II.

THE LIBERAL PARTY'S BETRAYALS OF THE WORKERS.

'Auld Scotland has a raucle tongue,
She's just a deevil wi' a rung;
An' if she promise auld or young
To tak' their part,
Though by the neck she should be strung,
She'll no desert.'

BURNS: *Earnest Cry and Prayer.*

i. SHOULDER TO SHOULDER IN STRUGGLING FOR RIGHTS.

THOUGH it is now ten or eleven years ago, it may, perhaps, still be remembered in the Western Highlands and Islands that the burden of all my speeches—often on bare hillsides, when we were denied kirk or school-house—was that, in fighting for our old Highland Rights, we were fighting no mere local battle, but were, as became Highlanders, fighting in the van of the far greater battle for the Rights of the Workers everywhere; that our old Highland motto, therefore, *Ri Guailibh a Cheile* ('Shoulder to Shoulder'), should henceforth be interpreted to mean not Highlanders only, but Highlanders and Lowlanders, Celts and Sassenachs, together shoulder to shoulder; and hence, that our battle should be waged in the high and exalted spirit that animates all men who feel that they are fighting, not for themselves only, but for others. I would still connect the Cause of the Crofters with the Cause of the Workers

generally. But whereas, ten or eleven years ago, I urged you to fight for your Rights in the spirit of men fighting also for the Rights of others, I would urge you now, not for your own sakes only, but for the sake also of others, to avenge on the Liberal Party the Betrayal of your Cause. And just as, in former years, in addressing meetings of English Workmen, I endeavoured to show that their Cause was bound up with yours, so would I still. Let them learn from the brief account I shall now give of the double-dealings of the Liberal Party with the just claims of the Highland Crofters what may be expected from that Party by all classes of Workers, and let them avenge on the Liberal Party their Betrayal of the Highland Crofters as—what it has, in fact, been—the Betrayal of the Workers everywhere.

ii. THE LIBERAL SUPPRESSION OF THE CROFTERS' REVOLT.

None have been more prominent than Liberals in trying to obscure the very plain question at issue in the Crofters' Revolt. Of old, Crofter townships, small agricultural communities, had common rights of grazing on the neighbouring hills. Hence, if each Crofter family of the township had even but three or four acres of arable, they were able, with their sheep and cattle on the hills, to live, as their saying was, 'in rough and plenty.' And, living thus, there was the means of giving their sons education, and preventing that 'congestion of population' of which we now hear so much, by that voluntary emigration to which Scots are notoriously prone. Well, the whole Crofter Revolt is simply due to the fact that these hill-grazings were robbed by the Landlords from their helpless Crofter tenants, for the sake of converting these grazings first into high-rented Sheep-farms, and then into still higher rented Deer-forests. As for the Crofters, one or other of two fates

overtook them, of which it would be difficult to say which was the more tragical. The one fate was to be swept out, every family of them, from whole glens which had been occupied by their forefathers from time immemorial, and so to perish, very many of them, either on desolated hillsides, or, still more miserably, in the slums of great towns. The other, and scarcely less tragical, fate was to be left in possession of their small crofts, but only to sink into a condition of hopeless and reckless misery, impossible as it was decently to subsist on their three or four acres of sterile arable without the sheep and cattle, which they could, of course, no more keep when they had been robbed of the hill-grazings. That is the whole secret of the Wrongs of the Crofters. And how essentially connected it is with that of the Wrongs of the Workers generally should, I think, be evident on a little reflection.

‘Hunger,’ it is said, ‘will tame even a lion;’ and an abject spirit goes too naturally with an empty stomach. Abject, however, as was the misery to which the Highland Crofters had been thus reduced, not abject yet was their spirit. And ‘the Winged Island,’ Skye, has the honour of having led the Crofters’ Revolt. By whom was that Revolt suppressed with an overwhelming force of police and soldiers, and without the smallest consideration for the intolerable Wrongs which had caused that Revolt? By the Home Secretary of the then Liberal Government, the Chancellor of the Exchequer of the late Government, the possible Premier of the next Liberal Government, if the Liberal Party is permitted to survive this General Election—Sir William Harcourt. And who was the Liberal Home Secretary’s chief agent in the suppression of this just Revolt? The Liberal partisan, Sheriff Ivory. And has the Liberal Party changed since then in its mode of dealing with

revolts caused by intolerable Wrongs inflicted by Landlords? If the Crofters of Scotland have forgotten the suppression of their Revolt in Skye by Sir William Harcourt, the Miners of England have not forgotten the shooting down of their brethren at Featherstone by the late Liberal Home Secretary, Mr. Asquith. And yet it would seem that, in some strange way, it has actually been forgotten—and by the last person whom one could have imagined capable of forgetting it—under whose orders it was that Sheriff Ivory acted. Mr. Mackenzie, of the *Scottish Highlander*—the supporter, in 1892, of the Unionist, but now, in 1895, of the Liberal candidate for Inverness-shire—actually menaces us ‘with a few more military and police expeditions under the command of the ever-renowned and valiant Sheriff Ivory,’* if we do *not* vote for the Liberals. As if it had been a Tory, and not a Liberal, Home Secretary who had been guilty of these ‘expeditions,’ and would, as the last Liberal Home Secretary has very practically proved, be guilty of them again!

And this menace is all the more extraordinary, seeing that Mr. Mackenzie can surely not also have forgotten that Lord Salisbury has apprehended in the clearest way the ground on which the Crofters take their stand, and has in the most express terms recognised its justice. Not when his Party were out of office and bidding for office, but when they were in office, and when he himself was under all the responsibilities of a Conservative—or, if the nickname is preferred, Tory—Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury said, speaking at Edinburgh on December 1, 1888: ‘The Scottish Crofters Bill . . . had this particular merit. It was not a disturbance of old, long-established rights. The ground on which you interfered with the position of the Scottish

* *Scottish Highlander*, July 4, 1895, p. 4.

Crofters was that you said that, up to a comparatively recent period, they had held upon a tenure not the general tenure of these Islands, and that that tenure had by lapse by carelessness, by use, by encroachment, been converted into a condition of things wholly and unjustly disadvantageous to the Crofters. It was said that the old Clannish tenure, which was very different from the ordinary law of landlord and tenant in this country, had slipped into the law of landlord and tenant entirely to the advantage of the landlord, and that, without any consideration of the valuable interest which the clansmen formerly had in the land they held. That is a very fair argument.' Now, so strictly is it the fact that no Liberal Minister has expressed himself so strongly so clearly, and so justly on the Crofter Question as the Conservative Premier, that the last time, or one of the last times, I was at the Scottish Office as a humble member of a Highland deputation, Sir George Trevelyan could find no more conciliatory terms in which to address us than by quoting these words of Lord Salisbury's. And yet Mr. Mackenzie would have the men of Inverness-shire believe that, if they do not vote for the Liberal Party, Lord Salisbury will, as did the Liberals, send against them military and police expeditions under the command of the Liberal agent in such expeditions, Sheriff Ivory.

iii. THE LIBERAL EVASIONS OF THE CROFTERS' CLAIMS.

From what I have above said in pointing out that it was the robbery of their hill-grazings that was the origin of Crofter misery, and finally of Crofter revolt, it will be evident that, as this robbery was the chief wrong which the Crofters had suffered, the chief remedy for their wrongs was restoration of their hill-grazings. In my 'Shoulder to Shoulder' (*Ri Guailibh a Cheile*)

Papers, in our little organ, *The Crofter*, in 1885, I defined Highland Rights generally as those *Customary Rights of Land-tillers against Landlords which have naturally arisen out of the primitive economic condition of Joint Ownership*. These Highland Rights I more specifically stated to be *Fair Rents, Fixity of Tenure, and Fair Holdings*, and that these were true *Rights* I showed by a chronological series of extracts from authoritative writers on the customs of the Highlands. Of these *Rights* the chief, and that, indeed, without which the others were of little value, was the *Right to Fair Holdings*. And the fact that chiefly justifies the application of so strong a term as 'betrayal' to the conduct of the Liberal Party in their dealings with the Crofters is this: They have again and again during these last dozen years obtained our suffrages by promises with respect to these three Highland Rights of Fair Rents, Fixity of Tenure, and, above all, *Fair Holdings*, which have either never been fulfilled, or have been fulfilled only in the most restricted and most procrastinating manner possible. Of this double-dealing conduct of the Liberal Party I now propose to give some details. And I trust that these details will be of interest not to Crofters only, but to Workers generally throughout the whole of the United Kingdom, as illustrations of the double-dealings and betrayals which the claims of each and all of them are likely to meet with from the Liberal Party.

Suppressed as the Crofters' Revolt was in Skye, it gave rise on the part of the Government to a Commission of Inquiry, Lord Napier's, and, on the part of Scotsmen, in England as well as in Scotland, to the formation of a Highland Land Law Reform Association, of which the first annual meeting was held in London in the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, on May 30, 1883. As result of the agitation, justified by the report of the Napier

Commission, and energetically prosecuted by our Association, the Western Highland counties at the General Elections of 1885 and 1886 returned members pledged to vote neither for Liberal nor Conservative, but for the redress of Crofter Wrongs. Hence the Crofters Act of 1886. But though it restored in some degree to the Crofters two of their Rights, *Fair Rents* and *Fixity of Tenure*, it withheld the chief of all, *Fair Holdings*. To concede that would have been to restore the Hill-grazings, and touch the interests of Liberal owners or tenants of Sheep-farms and Deer-forests. A decade, therefore, has passed without a step being taken in that direction. Six years of these ten we were under a Conservative Government. But only the most reckless partisan can affirm that the Liberals are more disposed than the Conservatives—unless absolutely obliged by political conditions—to yield to claims that would encroach on Landlord privileges. As a matter of fact, almost every Amendment of the Crofters Bill proposed by the Highland members was negatived by the Liberal Government; even the provisions for securing *Fair Rents* and *Fixity of Tenure* were restricted to but a portion of the Highland area; and all our efforts during the last three years of Liberal Government to get the benefits of the Crofters Act extended beyond the very restricted area of its application have proved unavailing.

Nor less unavailing, it need hardly be said, have been all our efforts to obtain from the late Liberal Government those *Fair Holdings*, the concession of which would mean the breaking up of the Deer-forests—formed though these have generally been by the most ruthless eviction and high-handed spoliation. Endless *sympathy* was, of course, expressed at the Scottish Office with the views and representations of Highland deputations. But it was maintained, with the too evident purpose of putting off the

evil day, that there could be no legislation in the direction of increasing Holdings and repeopling Glens, the pastures now of red-deer, until another Commission had reported on the whole subject. We urged in reply that such a Commission was useless, seeing that the afforested lands formerly under cultivation, and fit for reoccupation by Crofters, were already sufficiently well ascertained, and had, in fact, been indicated on a large map founded on the Ordnance Survey, and specially prepared for the Highland Land Law Reform Association.* The necessity of such a postponing Commission was, however, still insisted on. Its appointment was, nevertheless, delayed till further delay seemed dangerous. When it was at length nominated by the chief Liberal Whip, Lord Tweedmouth, it was found to be composed chiefly either of Conservatives or of pliant Liberals. And when the report of this Commission was at length published, several curious things were remarked in it, as, for instance, the absence of all reference to the excellent land for Crofter Holdings in Lord Tweedmouth's own Forest. Most remarkable, however, of all was the fact that the new Crofters Bill, the production of which was year after year postponed by the Liberal Government till the Deer-Forest Commission had been appointed and had reported, contained no provisions whatever founded on the facts reported by its Commissioners as to afforested lands fit for Crofter occupation. And it was but too apparent that the Government Bill, even restricted as it was to provisions with respect

* I may, perhaps, take some little credit for having, from the very beginning of our movement, constantly urged the preparation of such a map, and finally succeeded in completing it, though this would have been impossible without the ardent co-operation of my friends, Mr. Murdoch, Mr. Donald Macrae ('Balallan'), and others, who could, in various directions, supplement my personal knowledge of the Forest-area of Scotland.

to lease holders and the extension of the area of application of the original Crofters Act, was never meant to pass, and was introduced only for electioneering purposes.

IV. THE LIBERAL SPLITTING-UP OF THE CROFTERS' LEAGUE.

Governments, and not least conspicuously Liberal Governments, use three methods in resisting popular demands. The first method is, of course, the brutal one of suppressing, or attempting to suppress, these demands by physical force—imprisonment, exile, or death. This method, as we have seen, was tried, but unsuccessfully, by the Liberal Government with reference to the Crofters' demands. The other two methods have been, as is, indeed, ordinarily the case, used by the Liberal Government simultaneously, and with, it must be admitted, conspicuous success in their dealings with the Claims of the Crofters. One of these methods is that of concession, but concession postponed, on one pretext or another, to the last limit of patience; and, when finally granted, restricted to the last limit of acceptance. Of this method of evasion I have just given illustrations in the foregoing paragraphs. The other method, employed simultaneously with that of reluctant and restricted concessions, is that which one might characterize briefly as corruption, but which I shall rather describe as the method of splitting up the organization making itself obnoxious in urging popular demands. Of this method, very liberally used by the late Liberal Government, I now propose to give some indications. But it will be understood that, as I desire to avoid as much as possible all personalities, these indications can be only of the most general character.

During the first years of the Crofter movement, before we were tampered with by the Liberal Government,

all connected with the movement were united in enthusiastic, self-sacrificing work, and there is, perhaps, nothing in my life that I recall with more pleasure than these first years. There was no question with anyone then as to how much he was personally to get by the movement. The question with everyone was only as to how much he could give, not in money only, but in time and in work for the redressing of what we felt to be intolerable wrongs. The younger of two brothers, equally enthusiastic, worked with an enthusiasm so reckless in one of the first Crofter Candidate Elections, that it killed him in the prime of his youth. All working gratuitously, and the very room in which we met being lent, every penny collected went to the Cause. Yet even so, at the very height of the agitation, and when we were compelling a hearing both in the *Times* and in Parliament, the balance of the Crofter Fund in hand was often almost *nil*. To verify certain statements I had made in the *Times*, and which had been questioned, I set out after the Conference at Dingwall in 1884, and tramped through Skye and all the Outer Hebrides with the ever-to-be-remembered John Macpherson of Glendale and the Rev. Mr. MacCallum, then known as 'The Prophet.' And what I then saw, in the Long Island especially, both of the misery caused by ruthless overriding of Rights, and of enthusiastic determination to reclaim these Rights, remains with me as an ineffaceable memory and an enduring lesson.

Such enthusiasm as then animated the people of the Highlands and Islands, and some, at least, of their London countrymen, would certainly have been, not in word only, but in deed, sympathized with and cherished by the first Whigs. For, like the enthusiasm of a Lord William Russell, a Lord Cavendish, and an Andrew Marvell, this also was an enthusiasm of no merely wild

and sentimental character, but one that had a clear historical justification. The reverse, however, of cherishing and of sympathy—save, of course, in diplomatic phrases—this enthusiasm met with from those bastard representatives of the Whigs—the Liberals. A memorable demonstration of this enthusiasm was that at the Crofter Conference at Portree in 1885. But memorable, sadly memorable, as a demonstration of something very different from self-sacrificing enthusiasm was the second Crofter Conference at Portree, in 1892. It followed the General Election and Liberal triumph of August of that year. And one heard nothing then but sordid details as to how much this man had had, and how much the other, from the Liberal exchequer at the late General Election. A split in the hitherto united ranks of the Highland Land League was now begun, and at the Crofter Conference at Glasgow the following year (1893) it was miserably completed. The natural result followed. Not even Dr. Clark's urgently-required single-clause Bill for the relief of Crofter leaseholders was passed into law. And so thoroughly had the Government succeeded in paralyzing the Crofter League as a means of benefiting the Crofters, so thoroughly had the Government succeeded in converting it into a subservient Party tool, that the Liberals found themselves able to dispense with any such further Crofter legislation as they are even more definitely opposed to than are the Conservatives.

V. SHOULDER TO SHOULDER IN AVENGING BETRAYAL.

Surely the facts which I have above recalled—the Liberal suppression of the Crofters' Revolt; the Liberal evasions of the Crofters' Claims when their Revolt, though suppressed for a time, found a voice at length in Parliament; and the Liberal splitting-up of the

Crofters' League and subordination of it to mere Party purposes—surely these facts should make it impossible for any true-hearted Crofter or Crofter's friend to vote at this General Election for an Official Liberal Candidate, or for any Liberal, indeed, save such long-trying and independent men as Sir Donald Macfarlane, Dr. Clark, and Mr. Weir. And surely the illustrations I have above given of Liberal double-dealing with the Crofters should so effectually warn other Workers throughout the United Kingdom—where such warning may be needed—of what they have to expect from the Liberal Party, that they will join with their brethren of the Highlands in such Anti-Liberal votes at this election as will be at once a fit punishment for betrayal, and a warning to Conservatives as well as Liberals against betrayal in the future. The Gaelic phrase which is Englished as 'shoulder to shoulder' has a finer significance than its English equivalent. It means such a locking together of the arms of men as was practised, for instance, in the fording of Highland streams when dangerously swollen in width and depth—the tallest and the strongest being the first and the last, with the shortest and weakest in the centre, all locked together with mutually supporting shoulders, passed safely through, to form against the foe on the other side. Thus, 'shoulder to shoulder,' let every section of Workers, great and small, hold together in passing through this General Election, and make an end of the Liberal Party.

CHAPTER III.

THE DESERVED EXTINGUISHMENT OF THE LIBERAL PARTY.

ANTONY. Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest

(For Brutus is an honourable man ;

So are they all, all honourable men),

Come I to speak.

I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke,

But here I am to speak what I do know.

SHAKESPEARE : *Julius Caesar*, Act iii., Sc. 2.

i. THE DETERMINING CONDITIONS OF THE SITUATION.

It was a prophetic instinct that gave such exasperated bitterness to the vituperation of Mr. Chamberlain on his severance of himself from the Liberal, and his formation of the Unionist, Party. For it must have been obscurely felt, if it was not clearly seen, that the Liberal Party was founded on no definite ground whatever of distinctive Principle ; that it was held together only by a strict discipline in repeating now one and now another shibboleth ; and hence, that such a secession as that of Mr. Chamberlain was a presage of the dissolution of the Party. Already it must have been obscurely felt, if not clearly seen, that there were looming in the future New Parties, which would be very far otherwise opposed than were Liberals and Conservatives ; Parties distinguished, not merely by different political names, but by different economical principles ; and hence that, in the future, it might appear too generally evident that there was no further necessity for the existence of the Liberal Party than the satisfaction of personal ambitions. Whether Mr. Chamberlain thus saw what was coming, I do not know, but he was the first to act as if he did, and he has thus been guilty of the unpardonable sin of forestalling those who might now wish to follow his

example. For the main determining conditions of the present political situation are the further progress now towards the formation of two economically distinguished Parties, and the consequent distrusted effecteness of the Liberal Party.

ii. THE FRAUD OF THE 'ABOLITION OF THE LORDS' CRY.

Political Parties cannot, alas ! be trenchantly distinguished, this one as Honest, the other as Dishonest. But greater Honesty naturally distinguishes a Party which actually is what it professes to be, Conservative. And naturally also greater Dishonesty distinguishes a Party which parades as Revolutionary, while all we know of the characters, opinions, and circumstances of its leaders assures us that they really differ from Conservatives only as feebler friends of Conservatism, and more treacherous foes of Radicalism. In a word, the political ambitions of the Liberal leaders require them to profess sympathies and to give pledges which the pecuniary interests and quite unheroic character of every one of them makes it impossible rationally to believe genuine.

In their personal relations the Liberal leaders are, of course, all 'honourable men.' But present conditions make it unfortunately necessary to distinguish between personal and political morality—the fact unquestionably being that a man, incapable of anything fraudulent in private life, may, in his public life, participate in Cries which, if one is to speak plainly, can hardly be justly characterized otherwise than as fraudulent. I submit, at least, that in the following pages some justification will be offered of characterizing each of the great Liberal Cries, and first of all that as to the House of Lords, as—a Fraud.

The Liberal Leader, in the great speech reported in the newspaper that comes to hand as I write, declares the policy of the Liberal Party to be, above all things, 'the annihilation of the legislative preponderance of the House of Lords.' This, we are told by his Liberal supporters, is 'the one issue, success on which necessarily assists and promotes success on all the others.' But can such blindness really be attributed to Lord Rosebery, or, indeed, to any one of the Liberal Leaders, as inability to see that those who seriously desire the abolition of the House of Lords desire it only in order that the chief obstacle may be removed to the abolition of Private Landlordism? He who seriously desires the means desires the end. But can it be believed that Lord Rosebery, of all men in the kingdom; that Lord Rosebery, the first object of whose ambition was to marry an heiress, and who, having accomplished that object, owns great estates in England as well as in Scotland; that Lord Rosebery, closely connected with the wealthiest ring of Hebrew Capitalists in Europe—can it be believed that he is a man seriously to desire the abolition of an institution, the chief safeguard of Capitalism and of Landlordism; that he is a man who may be trusted loyally to lead against the House of Lords without betrayal of his followers? A century ago, indeed, French nobles, with a splendid recklessness, a magnificent, though short-lived enthusiasm, gave up their seigniorial rights; and, even in this country, a Duke of Richmond advocated Universal Suffrage, and a Duke of Norfolk, at a public banquet, gave the toast, 'The health of our Sovereign, and the majesty of the People.'* But neither Lord Rosebery, nor his Hebrew connections, have given any indication of the possibility

* The banquet was in celebration of Fox's birthday, on January 24, 1798, at the Crown and Anchor tavern.

of *their* being animated by such perilous enthusiasms as these.

It is, then, impossible rationally to believe that Lord Rosebery desires what the abolition, or even, in his own words, 'the annihilation of the legislative preponderance,' of the House of Lords would, and especially with Payment of Members, manifestly lead to, and for the sake of which alone he would receive enthusiastic support in aiming at that abolition. He cannot, therefore, be rationally believed seriously to desire the *means* to ends which would so unpleasantly affect both himself as a Landlord and his Hebrew friends as Capitalists. And the conclusion must thus be forced, even, one would think, on Liberal partisans, that this 'concentration on the Lords' is but a calculated manœuvre, a political trick, a dishonest cry. Doubtless the House of Lords will not survive, as it is, very far into the next century. But it will be transformed under other leadership than Lord Rosebery's, and for a more serious reason than that which he chiefly assigns—rejection of an impossible Home Rule project, on which the Liberal Government, that passed it in the Commons, did not dare to appeal to the Country.

iii. THE FRAUD OF THE 'HOME RULE' CRY.

Intellectual capacities are always closely connected with moral characteristics. Insincerity always implies incapacity, or capacity of but a low order. It would, therefore, have been miraculous if the Liberal Party, founded on no distinctive principle, and maintaining itself in power only by adroit reversals of policy, had shown any great statesmanlike capacity in that Home Rule Policy which Party exigencies alone induced them to substitute for their previous 'Buckshot' Policy. To

all the more penetrating political thinkers it was evident long years before Home Rule became a Parliamentary Question, that two sets of forces were making inevitably for Home Rule devolutions of Parliamentary Work. These two forces are, first, the immense expansion and more and more complicated interests of the British Empire; and, secondly, the revival of national memories and aspirations in the chief constituent parts of the United Kingdom.

Not, however, from any such point of view was the problem of Home Rule regarded by the politicians, rather than statesmen, of the Liberal Party. Instead of a general British, it was made an Irish Question. As a far more *practical* way of treating the problem, this specialization of it was regarded. Yet how the problem was thus practically to be treated was kept a profound secret when the question of Home Rule was put before the electors at the Dissolution of 1892. And when the secret was at last revealed, it consisted of two impossible alternatives. At first, it was proposed that the Irish should be excluded from the British Parliament, which is still an Imperial, as well as an English, Scottish, Irish, and Welsh Parliament. But the same passionate resolve to maintain the Unity of our Empire as that which made our American kinsmen face the bloodiest Civil War on record rather than tolerate the idea of Separation, led to the abandonment of this first Home Rule alternative. The other alternative was, while giving the Irish a Parliament of their own in Dublin, still to retain them in our English, Scottish, and Welsh, as well as Imperial Parliament at Westminster. But the impossibility of this alternative was made evident by the very safeguards which were proposed to make it workable. For what was the use of nominally imposing on the Irish this condition and the

other if they were retained in a Parliament which still remained a National as well as an Imperial Parliament? English, Scottish, and Welsh as well as Imperial business would have been, on their side remorselessly, on ours intolerably, obstructed till every one of the conditions, not altogether to Irish liking, was absolutely abrogated. And the debates, therefore, about these safeguarding conditions, which could be, and would certainly thus be abrogated, could not but appear to the impartial onlooker a sorry farce.

Now, the facts which, I submit, justify me in stigmatizing this Home Rule Cry as a Fraud are these. When Mr. Morley, who, by the way, began his electioneering life with denouncing Home Rule,* raises the cry of Home Rule and gets a cheer for it, he must be perfectly well aware how perilous would be the question, '*What is your Home Rule Policy?*' For these cheers would certainly be considerably diminished in volume, if not, indeed, transformed into groans, were he to reply that his Home Rule Policy is the Policy of that Home Rule Bill which, even in the Commons, had, on its Third Reading, its majority of thirty-four, only in consequence of the disproportionate representation of Ireland. So true is it that the majority of the people of England, Scotland and Wales are entirely of the opinion of the House of Lords that the Liberal form of Home Rule Policy would be disastrous, that the *Daily Chronicle* was in general accordance with the rest of the Liberal Press when, in commenting on Mr. Morley's last Manchester speech, it said quite frankly, 'There is no definite measure of Home Rule now before the country.'

* I do not think I am mistaken in making this assertion, but I must add that I cannot immediately verify it, for I appear to have mislaid my note of the very definite expressions to this effect used by Mr. Morley—if my memory serves me—in his earlier, and unsuccessful, electioneering efforts.

In other words, the Liberal Party, finding that the country agrees with the Lords in condemning its Home Rule measure, has dropped that measure, and without substituting any other. Yet their prime charge in their indictment against the Lords is their rejection of a measure which the Liberal Party itself does not now dare to present to the country. For what is meant by Home Rule now, by almost every one who is in favour of it, is 'Home Rule all Round.' But that neither is now, nor has it ever been, the policy of the Liberal Party. On the contrary, those who, years ago—like, in my humble way, myself—advocated 'Home Rule all Round,' in opposition to the impracticable Liberal Home Rule Policy, were, as much as possible, suppressed. And yet Liberal Ministers endeavour to gain a cheer for what may be presumed to be *their* Home Rule from people who, they know, will, if they cheer, attach to the phrase a meaning which Liberal Ministers themselves do not attach to it, and which they have, in fact, strenuously condemned!

IV. THE FRAUD OF THE 'LEGISLATION FOR THE WORKERS' CRY.

The third great—and, as I think, fraudulent—Cry of the Liberal Party may be said to be 'Legislation for the Workers.' The Question that the great mass of the Workers are really interested in is, What Measures have our Rulers for ensuring work to the Unemployed, and Pensions to those no longer fit for work? But no Measures whatever of this kind has the Liberal Ministry even proposed. And for 'bread' Mr. Shaw-Lefevre offered deputations of the Unemployed, if not quite literally 'a stone,' at least stone-breaking in Workhouse-yards. Solutions of these two great Questions of the Unemployed and of Old Age Pensions may, however,

be approached indirectly, as well as directly; and this is being more and more clearly seen by the Workers. For it is seen how great, though indirect, an effect on the condition of the Workers may be exercised by Legislation with reference to the Land—with reference more particularly to Agricultural Holdings, and the Taxation of Land Values. In the demand, however, for such Measures as these is found the surest test of the essential identity of the Liberal and Conservative Parties. For such Measures, if at all effective in improving the condition of the Workers, would certainly be effective also in damaging the condition of the Non-workers. When it comes to so practical a Question as that, there is apt to be not a coalition only, but a fusion, between Liberal and Conservative Landlords. There is this difference, however, when such interests are touched, between the Liberal and Conservative Parties. The Liberals promise and betray: the Conservatives deny and concede—as, for instance, in the 'leading cases' of Catholic Emancipation, the Repeal of the Corn Laws, and Household Suffrage.

Of this promising and betraying on the part of the Liberals when their Landed Interests are touched I have already, I think, given a sufficiently convincing demonstration in my account, in the foregoing Chapter, of their dealing with the demand of the Crofters for the restoration of their Hill-grazings. At Election after Election the Crofters have been cajoled out of their votes by the promises not only of Liberal Candidates, but of the Liberal Government. But the one thing that, above all the rest, they want, they have not yet got. Worse than that, the afforesting and consequent depopulation of the Highlands have positively increased under Liberal Governments. And strictly similar has been the dealing, or rather double-dealing, of the Liberal Govern-

ment with reference to the demanded Taxation of Land Values. So long ago as 1884 a Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes reported in favour of the rating of vacant land, and for reasons which apply with equal force to the rating of *all* Land, whether vacant or occupied, upon its value. And Taxation of Land Values has been urged by the London County Council and by Municipal and Rating Authorities all over the Kingdom. The Newcastle Program, therefore, upon which the Liberal Government were returned to power in 1892, contained two distinct pledges to tax Land Values. Yet nothing has been done by the Liberal Government to fulfil its pledges in this matter. Nor can lack of practical suggestions as to the carrying out of such Taxation, nor lack of opportunity, nor lack of support in the House of Commons, nor even, as in the case of other unfulfilled pledges, the obstacle of the House of Lords, be pleaded as an excuse for the non-redemption of these pledges.* The late Liberal Government's only excuse can be but the very poor one that the redemption of their pledges would have touched the interests of their supporters.

To be fair, however, the late Liberal Government did make an attempt at Legislation for the Workers—nay, an attempt which, to take their own word for it, was of a most noble and heroic character. Pledges or no pledges, nothing that would seriously affect landed, or even sporting interests could, save under absolute compulsion, be conceded, whatever might be the benefit to the Workers. 'But,' they said, 'can it be denied that Beer is the Working Man's Bane? Can we then legislate more beneficently in his interests than by giving a Local Veto on this baneful Beer? And though neither

* See: *Unredeemed Pledges. English Land Restoration League, No. 29.*

he nor the publican who supplies him may like this, will not the votes we may lose in that direction be probably more than counterbalanced by the ardent support of the Temperance Organizations?' Hence the Local Veto Bill. Now, as to that Bill, considered by itself, it is unnecessary for me here to express any opinion, except, of course, one of cordial agreement with its general aim—the diminution of drunkenness. How that is best to be effected is another question, not here to be dealt with. For what here concerns us is the utter inadequacy of any such measure as this Local Veto Bill as a means of solving those grave problems as to the Unemployed and the Aged, which really interest the Workers. Only measures which, directly or indirectly, deal in a thoroughgoing manner with these problems can be truly entitled to be called 'Legislation for the Workers.' And put forward, as this Local Veto Bill is, as a great Measure for the relief of the Workers, it must be pronounced no less of a Fraud than we have seen that such Cries as 'Abolition of the House of Lords' and 'Home Rule' are—not indeed in themselves—but in the mouths of Liberals.

V. THE THREE MEN IN A CANOE.

To sum up. The whole situation figures itself to me thus: In a frail canoe in deep water far from shore are three individuals, two of them men in easy circumstances, but bitter opponents, and one of them a Worker, hard pressed to make a living. Says one of the two Gentlemen: 'As we cannot fall foul of each other without all three going to the bottom, suppose each says truly what he thinks of the other? Briefly, then, and with incisive frankness, each characterizes the other. 'And what say you?' they ask of the third man. 'I agree with each of you,' he replies, 'and, by

God !' he adds, with startling energy, and making the crazy craft rock perilously, 'if you don't give me pledges of an easier life, we shall all drown together !' 'But have I not already given you pledges enough ?' cries, in mortal terror, one of them. 'Yes, you have, and broken them all !' 'It was all the fault of my Lord here !' he pleads, 'Come, let us shake hands !' The Worker, however, with a sudden and risky, but dexterous and successful movement, swings up the plaintive Gentleman and pitches him overboard. 'And now,' he says, turning to the other, 'I have got but one of you to deal with ; and you, I believe, are the honester of the two !'

CONCLUSION.

'Is there, beneath Love's noble name,
Can harbour, dark, the selfish aim
To bless himself alone ?

* * * *

Oh ye, who, sunk in beds of down,
Feel not a want but what yourselves create,
Think for a moment on his wretched fate
Whom friends and Fortune quite disown !
Ill satisfied keen Nature's clam'rous call,
Stretched on his straw he lays himself to sleep,
While through the ragged roof and chinky wall
Chill o'er his slumbers piles the drift' heap !'

BURNS: *A Winter Night.*

THE NEW PARTIES.

SUPPOSE the Liberal Party were, as a Parliamentary Party, defeated at the Elections of the next fortnight, the great mass of the Liberals of the Country would certainly soon find that they had reason to score a victory rather than a defeat. For what would be the result of the defeat of this Parliamentary Party ?

Such a defeat could hardly, I submit, result in anything but the extinguishment of the Party. This, no doubt, would be deplorable for the Official Members of the Liberal Party, as it would probably end the official careers of the whole 'Gang.' But that really need not disturb the equanimity of the vast mass of the Liberals of the Country. For if the Parliamentary Party were extinguished, it could only be by the rise, in opposition to Conservatism, of a Liberalism so thoroughgoing that it would drop the name of Liberalism. In a word, the result of the extinguishment of a Liberal Party which, as I have shown, is in no essential principle distinguishable from the Conservative Party, would be the formation of a New Party which would, at length, be in essential principle distinguishable from the Conservative Party. And of this the result would certainly be such a purification of political life as, were there more than, I fear, there is in the 'Nonconformist Conscience,' would alone be a sufficient cause for working at these Elections for the defeat of the Liberal Party.

No doubt reforms that the Liberals might promise may not be even promised by the Conservatives. But for all that, we may not be a penny the worse three years hence. How insignificant a proportion of the promises by which the Liberal Party won their majority at the Elections three years ago have been fulfilled !

And Ireland will unquestionably have to be dealt with—and conciliatorily dealt with—by Conservatives as well as by Liberals ; and, first, by a Land Act, and, secondly, by some sort of Home Rule Act. Doubtless the Conservatives will endeavour, by a curtailment of powers, to whittle Home Rule down to but some form of Local Government—first, in order that Landlord interests may be protected ; and, secondly, in order to ensure that we remain still a United Kingdom. This,

however, will force to the front the question of the constitution of a really Imperial Parliament—such a Parliament as, in not only maintaining the unity, but fostering a passion for the unity of the Empire, may allow of very considerable autonomous powers being granted to the five great constituent parts of the Kingdom—England, and London, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales; and such a Parliament as, having for members the best men of the Empire, would be a true, though no more a hereditary, House of Lords. In a word, Irish Home Rule, so far from being a question that can possibly be dealt with isolatedly in a single Irish Home Rule Act, as was attempted by the politicians, rather than statesmen, of the Liberal Party, necessarily involves in its solution a complete reorganization of Parliamentary Government. That is the great Question which, whether we like it or not, we shall have to face. Besides this, but intimately connected with it, are the great Economic Questions, which more especially affect the Workers. And, again, besides these Questions, there are the great Imperial Questions which are incomparably more closely connected with Economic Questions than the 'Little England' School would have the Workers believe. Surely, for the solution of such great and intimately-connected problems as these we require New Parties—Parties far more definitely distinguished than are our present Liberals and Conservatives. And, indeed, only by the formation in Parliament of two such Parties, truly corresponding to those already rapidly forming in the Country, can the inevitable great changes before us be effected in the way every good citizen must desire—be effected as, to use the great phrase of the Iron Duke, 'a Revolution by due course of Law.'

APPENDIX.

It may be worth while to reproduce the letter I wrote after the formation of the late Liberal Government. For it will be thus seen that my views of the Party, expressed in the days of its triumph, were identical with those above expressed in the days of its defeat. And the justification by the events of the last three years of the views as to Crofter Policy which I expressed in this letter of 1892 may perhaps influence the votes of Crofters now.

CROFTER POLICY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE 'SCOTTISH HIGHLANDER.'

SIR,—I have to thank Dr. Macgregor, M.P., for the comparatively courteous tone of his letter, but I should be glad, with your permission, to make some remarks in reply. Whether I was right in my estimate of the numbers of the Portree demonstration—estimating them as I did from the windows of the Portree Hotel, and recalling very many more Crofter demonstrations than Dr. Macgregor has been present at—is but a small matter. But the policy to be now pursued by the Crofters and their friends, whether in Parliament or not, is very far otherwise than a small matter; and it is on this subject that I would beg permission to make a few remarks.

The question is simply, Whether adulatory confidence in fair words, or frank avowal that votes depend, not on fair words, but on fair deeds, is the better policy? And the very issue of the *Scottish Highlander*, in which Dr. Macgregor's letter appears, alone contains

facts enough to prove the worthlessness of political pledges, and the futility of a 'confidence' policy. You report a speech of my friend, 'Balallar,' in which he justly denounces the worthlessness of Tory pledges. Can anyone, however, but a blind or paid partisan seriously maintain that Gladstonian are of any more practical value than Tory pledges, if what they pledge themselves to is opposed either to their economical principles, as advances of money, or to their landlord interests, as restoration of hill-grazings and breaking up of deer-forests? As you have yourself, sir, pointed out, Novar has now, after the General Election, clearly said what he would certainly not have hinted at before it, that adequate advances for public purposes in the Highlands are no more likely to be granted now than they were during Sir George Trevelyan's former tenure of the Secretaryship of Scotland in 1886. And as you also, sir, point out, Dr. Macgregor's own constituents have had their Gladstonianism rewarded by postponement, if not abandonment, of the railway they had hoped for.

As to 'sowing the seeds of discord and dissension' among the people, I desire and hope to do quite the reverse. At this, a very critical period of that Crofter movement, with which I am proud to think that I have been associated from the commencement, I desire and hope to do something towards uniting the whole Highland Land League in a definite and determined Radical, rather than Liberal, policy, and a policy enfeebled by no weak votes of confidence in pledges, which these very votes of confidence will tempt Gladstonians to disregard. Were there any grounds for believing that a contenting Irish Home Rule Bill will be quickly passed and attention then immediately directed to the demands of Scotland, and particularly of the Highlands, the Crofters might certainly, in that case, be justified in not, in the meantime, pressing their demands inconveniently. But the revelations of the Government spy, Major Le Caron, on the one hand (see *Pall Mall Gazette*, October 26, 1892), and the manifesto of Lord Salisbury on the other (see *National Review*, November, 1892), should decisively show the folly of the hope that a final and contenting settlement of the Irish question is within measurable distance. And I say, therefore, that it would be mere infatuation in the Crofters to postpone the urgent pressing of their demands until that wholly indefinite period when the Irish have ceased from troubling and the Gladstonians are at rest.

Dr. Macgregor thinks that 'while we should trust to the Liberal Party, we should not sacrifice our independence or amalgamate with any party'; and further, that we should not allow ourselves

to be 'alienated from the guidance and example of the ministers of the Gospel.' I think that the present crisis in political affairs is far too acute for such an attempt to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds—to run with Radicals and hunt with Liberals. To advise us to trust to the Liberal Party, and yet keep ourselves independent of them, is too self-contradictory a policy to be practicable. If Dr. Macgregor trusts to the Liberal Party, he will have to show his trust in obeying the directions of the Liberal Whips. They will certainly not allow themselves to be imposed upon by words, not supplemented by deeds. And as to the 'guidance and example of the ministers of the Gospel,' perhaps the less said of that the better. There are exceptions, no doubt; and among the pleasantest and most ineffaceable recollections of my life will ever be those of my tramp through the Outer Hebrides in 1884, with two of the heroes of the Crofter Revolt in its earlier years—John Macpherson, of Glendale, and the Rev. Donald MacCallum, then of Waternish. But to follow 'the guidance and example of the Highland ministers of the Gospel' generally would be to act on the basely worldly plan of opposing a just movement while advocacy of it might prejudice one's selfish interests, and patronizing it when these selfish interests may be prejudiced by continued opposition.

To conclude. Willingly I admit that we had much for which to thank the former Liberal Government. Everything they could give, without giving the main thing—the hill-grazings, deprivation of which is the whole secret of Crofter destitution—they did give. But what has been given only makes it impossible to stave off the main demand. That main demand, however, will be found to imply the abolition of Landlordism in the Highlands. To that the Gladstonians, or Official Liberals, have been, and are, as determinedly opposed as are the Tories. Nothing, therefore, in that direction will be got from Liberals any more than from the Tories, except by menace. But, considering not only the immense value, but the immense complexity of the interests connected with and dependent on the maintenance of Landlordism, I have always, while interested in, more than questioned the feasibility of, the plans for its wholesale abolition proposed by my friends of the Land Restoration and Land Nationalisation Societies. In the Highlands, however, both the value and the complexity of private interests in the land are far less than in any other equally extensive part of the United Kingdom. And it is on this account that, from the very beginning of the Crofter Movement, I have urged, and would still urge, that, not for their own sakes only, but for the sake also of

that more general movement in the van of which Highlanders have the honour to be, they should continue strenuously, and with 'confidence' in none but themselves, to work towards their great aim—transference of the land from private Landlords to Local Authorities for the benefit of the Community.—I am, sir, your obedient servant,

J. S. STUART-GLENNIE.

October 27, 1892.

**END OF
TITLE**